

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 855  
By Norris

A RESOLUTION to honor and recognize Heather Elizabeth van Stolk, 2004 Champion of the 77th Annual Memphis-Shelby County Spelling Bee.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to pay tribute to those students who through their natural talents and unflagging commitment to academic excellence have distinguished themselves and brought honor to this State; and

WHEREAS, Heather Elizabeth van Stolk is one such exceptional student who won the 77<sup>th</sup> Annual Memphis-Shelby County Spelling Bee on March 6, 2004, at the University of Memphis; and

WHEREAS, one hundred thousand students from across Shelby County competed in school spelling bees prior to the championship, with 181 qualifying for the championship; on March 6, 160 of Memphis' brightest young minds joined Miss van Stolk at the Memphis-Shelby County Spelling Bee, sponsored by *The Commercial Appeal*, which is owned by E.W. Scripps Company, the parent of the Scripps Howard National Spelling Bee; and

WHEREAS, as competitors fell by the wayside, Miss van Stolk calmly progressed through the competition, cheered on by her parents, her twin sister (and fellow accomplished speller) Courtney Anne, and three of her favorite stuffed animals; and

WHEREAS, after spelling "misorientation," "larithmics," "ingenue," "hygienic," "pomander," "viridity," and "peurile," she was presented with the word that, if spelled correctly, would give her the championship, "menorah"; and

WHEREAS, as soon as the announcer pronounced the word, Miss van Stolk quickly and flawlessly spelled the word and was pronounced champion; and

WHEREAS, the accomplishment rewarded countless hours of preparation; an avid reader who has studied French, Latin, and Dutch, she built upon her substantial base of

knowledge by tirelessly reviewing her *Paideia* and spelling words aloud when quizzed by her parents or sister; and

WHEREAS, the victory also brought a host of prizes to Miss van Stolk, including savings bonds, reference materials, an electronic personal organizer, a watch, a comic strip umbrella, a DVD of *Spellbound*, and a large trophy; and

WHEREAS, she also received a *National Spelling Bee Paideia* to help her prepare for the 2004 Scripps Howard National Spelling Bee, to be held in Washington, D.C. between May 30<sup>th</sup> and June 5<sup>th</sup>, where she will undoubtedly continue to represent Tennessee with honor and poise; and

WHEREAS, born August 14, 1991, in Hackensack, New Jersey, Heather Elizabeth van Stolk is a student in the seventh grade at St. George's High School in Collierville, where she has earned the respect and admiration of her peers and teachers alike; and

WHEREAS, through diligent study, steady composure, and steadfast commitment of time and talent, she has achieved outstanding success and has joined the ranks of the best and brightest students in Tennessee and our country; and

WHEREAS, a supremely talented young lady, she plays tennis and lacrosse, has penned eighteen chapters of a fantasy book set in medieval times, and is an accomplished musician; and

WHEREAS, she is a devout Christian and uses her musical talent to serve her Lord and give Him glory; she sings in the choirs of St. George's Episcopal Church, has attended Royal School of Music camps in St. Louis, and will travel to Dublin, Ireland this summer as part of the choir in residence at Christ Church Cathedral; and

WHEREAS, Heather Elizabeth van Stolk's display of aptitude, character, and ambition surely bodes well for her future success; and

WHEREAS, her noteworthy achievement is a tremendous source of pride for her parents, Mark C. and Lise K. van Stolk, her school, and her community; and

WHEREAS, Miss van Stolk's dedication to excellence is clearly deserving of the respect, admiration, and commendation of this legislative body; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

CONCURRING, that we hereby commend and honor Heather Elizabeth van Stolk on winning the 77<sup>th</sup> Annual Memphis-Shelby County Spelling Bee, thank her for serving as an excellent example of the high quality of Tennessee's youth, and extend to her our best wishes for continued success in the National Spelling Bee and in all her future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.